

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 01912

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, EI, UK
SUBJECT: TELEGRAPHIC MEMCON: COUNSELOR NIMETZ AND
IRISH FONMIN MICHAEL O'KENNEDY

1. ON JUNE 14, 1978, COUNSELOR NIMETZ AND AMBASSADOR SHANNON MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER O'KENNEDY, SEAN DONLON, AND SEAN O HUIGINN OF THE IRISH FOREIGN OFFICE TO DISCUSS NORTHERN IRELAND ISSUES AND RELATED MATTERS.

2. O'KENNEDY STATED THAT RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN WERE GENERALLY QUITE GOOD. THE AREA OF COOPERATION WAS EXPANDING AND AN ECONOMIC PROGRAM RELATING TO BORDER DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED VERY SHORTLY. IN THE SECURITY AREA ALSO, COOPERATION WAS GOOD ALTHOUGH TEMPORARILY DISTURBED BY AN UNFORTUNATE REMARK BY BRITISH NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY ROY MASON A FEW MONTHS AGO. THE THIRD AREA OF CONCERN WAS THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND, AND IN THIS AREA THE GOI WAS DOING ITS BEST TO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE BY NOT TALKING PUBLICLY ABOUT REUNIFICATION. IT WAS THE VIEW OF THE GOI THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MOVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL FIELD IN THE PERIOD BEFORE A BRITISH ELECTION. THE TREND, HOWEVER, WAS ONE OF DISILLUSIONMENT IN THE NORTH WITH THE LACK OF LOCAL AUTHORITY. THIS WAS TRUE IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AND IN THE PROTESTANT COM-
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MUNITY. DIRECT RULE OF NORTHERN IRELAND FROM WESTMINSTER WAS NOT A SATISFACTORY LONG-TERM SOLUTION. IN THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD THE GOI HOPED FOR A MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE BY BRITAIN WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS WITH GOI ON NORTHERN IRISH ISSUES IN SEEKING COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS. O'KENNEDY DID NOT SEEM TO EXPECT A MAJOR INITIATIVE TOWARD POWER-SHARING

IN THE VERY NEAR TERM BUT, UPON BEING PRESSED, INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT NO PROGRESS WOULD RESULT UNLESS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND PRESSED THE NORTHERN UNIONISTS.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON INTERROGATION METHODS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, O'KENNEDY REFERRED TO THE VERY MODERATE ANSWER HE HAD GIVEN THAT DAY TO A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AND TO THE FACT THAT THE OPPOSITION WAS NOT MAKING AN ISSUE OF THE REPORT AT THIS TIME. HE FURTHER STATED THAT THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY HAD IMPROVED IN THE LAST YEAR AND WAS BEGINNING TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY. THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT WOULD DAMAGE THIS PROCESS AND THE BRITISH WOULD HAVE TO RESPOND IN A POSITIVE FASHION. O'KENNEDY AND OTHERS BELIEVED THAT THE MOST SENSIBLE RESPONSE WOULD BE TO CLOSE DOWN THE CASTLEREAGH INTERROGATION FACILITY SINCE IT HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF IMPROPER INTERROGATION METHODS.

4. O'KENNEDY, IN GENERAL, BELIEVED THAT US POLICY TOWARD THE IRISH QUESTION HAD BEEN HELPFUL AND THAT AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME IN THE FUTURE, REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT WOULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL.

5. O'KENNEDY TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON THE FORTHCOMING VISIT
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OF THE GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER TO IRELAND INDICATING THAT THE GOI WOULD PRESS GREECE TO BE FLEXIBLE IN ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH TURKEY. HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS A MATTER OF CONCERN TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY GENERALLY, AND THAT AT THEIR MEETING EARLIER IN THE WEEK, THE EC MINISTERS HAD AGREED ON A PROCEDURE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH TURKEY AFTER GREECE ENTERS THE COMMUNITY.
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